

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19894395

# EMPOWERING CENTRAL JAVANESE WOMEN'S COMMUNITIES BASED ON ETHNO-GENDER USING GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS)

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Received: 04/03/2026

Accepted: 02/04/2026

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## ABSTRACT

*The present research aims to explain (1) the ethno-gender-based women's communities in Central Java using Geographic Information System (GIS), and (2) the form of empowerment. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative research with a content analysis strategy was adopted. Data sources consisted of questionnaires distributed to women's communities across various cities and districts in Central Java, as well as informants from these communities. The data sources also included documents resulting from the questionnaires, interviews, and GIS analyses. Data were collected through document analysis of questionnaires, interviews, and GIS results. Meanwhile, the validity process was achieved through method and data source triangulation. The data analysis technique applied was an interactive approach based on the work of Miles and Huberman. The results showed that most members of the ethno-gender-based women's communities in Central Java were aged 21-30 years (56.67%), the majority had a bachelor's degree (71.67%), and the others were students (50%). Furthermore, there are 38 culture-based communities, 35 literary-based communities, and 37 religion-based communities. Based on interviews, most community founders and leaders stated that the establishment and continued existence were aimed at empowering women. Members also experienced valuable benefits from establishing communities, including a platform for self-actualization, opportunities to exhibit competence, and growth in self-confidence.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Women's Community, Central Java, Ethno-Gender, Geographic Information System.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sex refers to the biological differences between men and women, which reflect the nature of God. The differences are evident through physiological and hormonal variations. However, gender is shaped by social and cultural constructs that distinguish men from women. Based on this perspective, men are associated with qualities such as strength, toughness, including logic, and women are connected to fragility, delicacy, and emotionality, with roles centered on nurturing as well as caregiving. The diverse roles create distinctions between masculinity and femininity (Connel, 1995). In personal relationships, masculinity is often recognized when served by women, while femininity is fulfilled by serving men (Darwin, 2021). Patriarchal culture enforces masculine behaviors valued as manly and symbols of true masculinity (Hearn, 2017). Patriarchy describes a power structure where men dominate women, maintained through various media and methods (Connel, 1995).

Ethno-gender is a theory that combines ethnicity, culture, and gender to understand how women's roles are influenced by culture. The concept of gender varies across cultures because it is heavily affected by the values, norms, and social structures of each community. Therefore, ethno-gender shapes the formation of privileges related to the exercise of state power including discrimination against members of other gender groups (Urankhaeva, 2023).

In Central Javanese culture, women are often perceived as occupying a subordinate role within a patriarchal society. This social and ideological construct considers men superior to women Walby (1989), which is evident in the dominance in political leadership, moral authority, social rights, and property ownership both in the public and domestic sectors (Yoon et al., 2020). Patriarchal ideas focus on hierarchical relationships, connected to individualism and collectivism. In addition, women are viewed as fragile beings belonging to men, and emotionally determined based on appearance (Widarti & Purnomo, 2025).

The women in Central Javanese were associated with broader domestic roles, such as masak (cooking), macak (dressing), and manak (giving birth). These domestic roles were entirely controlled by men, particularly the husbands. Additionally, women were described as kanca wingking (backroom companions), implying positioned behind the scenes, to serve, cook for, and sexually satisfy the husbands. Other similar terms used include dapur (kitchen), sumur (well), and kasur (bed), suggesting that domestic roles consisted of

cooking in the kitchen, washing at the well, and serving the husbands in bed. This strong patriarchal culture viewed women solely as servants to the husbands, shaped according to men's social and cultural expectations. If these gender roles are broken, the culprits are perceived as violating social norms in Javanese culture.

The social roles of women in Central Javanese culture are shown through various Serat (ancient text) and pieces of advice. Furthermore, women are associated with the roles of (1) macak (dressing), masak (cooking), and manak (giving birth), (2) dapur (kitchen), sumur (well), and kasur (bed), including (3) kanca wingking (backroom companions). Some teachings reported that women are symbolized by a) Jempol (thumb) implying "pol ing tyas" (when plying the role of a wife, women should be completely obedient to the husband), b) Telunjuk, suggesting "penuduh" (women should not argue with respective husbands), c) Middle finger depicting "penungul" (women should honour the husbands to maintain dignity, d) Ring finger (women should have a sweet face when serving the husbands and be ready if something else is needed), and e) little finger or "jejenthik" (women should be skilled at serving the husbands gently) (Budi, 2000).

Based on this perspective, the power relations between women and men are patriarchal. Ihsani (2021) stated that the patriarchal system that dominates a community's culture creates new problems in the form of gender inequality and injustice responsible for impacting most aspects of human life. Patriarchal culture positioned men as the main controllers of communities, granting the power to do whatever is desired. Simultaneously, women are perceived as the weaker sex with minimal influence on the community and placed in an inferior position. Cultural practices that shape the diverse roles include beliefs that women do not need to be highly educated considering the position in the kitchen, practice of polygamy (Asmarani, 2017); early marriage, and domestic activities (Uyun, 2024).

The perception that women occupy the subordinate role has gradually begun to shift with the advent of modernity even though this belief remains dominate in Central Java, Indonesia. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) reported that the population of Central Java comprised 19,203,434 men and 19,030,499 women (Badan Pusat Statistik Jawa Tengah, 2025). The number of men and women participating in the public sector constituted 58.92% and 54.32%, respectively, with the limited participation associated with a lack of important roles in social, economic, political, health, and

cultural development (Badan Pusat Statistik Jawa Tengah, 2025). However, if women are not allowed to participate in development, which could benefit the progress of a nation, Indonesia would not become a developed country capable of achieving the SDGs.

The 17 SDG programs, include (1) poverty alleviation, (2) no hunger, (3) healthy and prosperous lives, (4) quality education, (5) gender equality, (6) clean water and adequate sanitation, (7) clean and affordable energy, (8) decent work and economic growth, (9) industry, innovation, and infrastructure, (10) reduced inequality, (11) sustainable cities and communities, (12) responsible consumption and production, (13) climate change, (14) ocean ecosystems, (15) terrestrial ecosystems, (16) peace, justice, and strong institutions, and (17) partnerships (The United Nations, 2016). Gender equality is among the SDG objectives, prioritized by the UN program. The focus is to end discrimination and gender-based violence, thereby ensuring women have access to quality education and decent work, as well as promoting full participation in political, economic, and social decision-making across all fields.

Gender equality is another main focus of the Asta Cita program implemented by the Indonesian government. According to the fourth Asta Cita, the main priority of the government is to promote gender equality and strengthen the roles of women in development. The objective is to ensure equal rights and opportunities, including fair treatment across education, politics, law, health, social, and cultural sectors. Educational opportunities enable the development of intellectual competence and skills to enlighten the next generation. Moreover, promoting gender equality and enhancing the roles of women are essential for building a just, inclusive, and sustainable society by maximizing potential in development.

Central Java has various women's communities active in economics, literacy, cultural preservation, religion, and empowerment programs. However, data on the distribution and characteristics of these communities remain limited. The various communities contributed to the fight for gender equality and the strengthening of women's roles in society. The participation in empowerment activities also contributed to the success of the Asta Cita and the United Nations' SDGs program.

The present ethno-gender-based research on Central Javanese women's community empowerment combined ethno-gender perspectives with GIS technology. In this context, GIS was used to map Central Javanese women across different

communities, including participation in social, cultural, religious, and other activities. The analysis carried out was based on the mapped results that outlined the connections among culture, gender, and geography in Central Java. GIS was also used to examine the women's community participation, which was affected by the development of cultural norms and social structures. Furthermore, GIS-related research conducted by Kumari (2025) identified patterns of crimes against women, such as domestic violence in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir over five years (2018–2022). The result showed spatial and temporal variations across districts in issues associated with rape, dowry deaths, and violence by husbands or relatives, spread throughout many regions in India. Similarly, GIS was used to map types of violence against women and the diverse locations where these crimes were committed in Mexico, aiding in the development of public policies (Galardo-Bernal, 2020).

Previous research on gender equality in literary works Hartung & Kunow (2025) examined the novel *Brick Lane*, which focused on Bangladeshi immigrants. In the novel, the wives of the immigrants were responsible for maintaining kinship ties, as well as caring for the sick and elderly relatives, according to traditional gender roles. Similarly, prior research by Fatah (2026) explored Nawal el-Saadawi's novel concerning cultural oppression that restricted women's freedom. Alshhre (2024) investigated traditional gender norms through portrayals of female characters who struggled for liberation in Saudi Arabia. The research by Widarti & Purnomo (2025) explored elements of sexism in Ratih Kumala's novel *Gadis Kretek*, where women were portrayed as weak and marginalized creatures. Verma & Kaur (2026) examined *In the Mahabharata*, Draupadi as a female character shows resistance against patriarchy which aims to achieve the freedom of an intelligent and self-aware individual.

The research on gender communities Dewi (2022) focused on a group of Indonesian teenage female readers of Japanese manga novels. Maulina & Fardani (2023) also examined a community in North Sumatra with the potential to promote gender justice through literary works, discussions, and training consisting of various groups. Additionally, Sumampouw & Patricia (2023) investigated the Yogyakarta or Mahardika gender community, responsible for spreading the values of feminism as well as positioning itself as a platform for women experiencing gender inequality in the country. The research by Wadei *et al.* (2024) examined the gender communities in Ejisu Juabeng Municipality and the

Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly in Ghana. It was found that religion, culture, education, family ties, and residence influenced gender equality in both rural and urban areas of Ghana.

Based on previous reviews, no research has been conducted on efforts to empower Central Javanese women's communities using ethno-gender approaches with Geographic Information System (GIS). Therefore, this research is valuable in supporting SDG 5, gender equality, and Asta Cita 4, which focuses on strengthening the roles of women in development. The proposed research questions include (1) What are the Central Javanese women's communities based on ethno-gender with GIS? and (2) What form of empowerment was based on ethno-gender with GIS?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Research Purposes

The research aims to describe (1) the ethno-gender-based women's community in Central Java, and (2) forms of empowerment using GIS.

### 2.2. Research Design

Descriptive qualitative research (Creswell, 2013); (Miles & Hubermann, 2020) with a content analysis strategy (Krippendorff, 2022) was adopted. The data sources included questionnaires that were distributed to the women's communities across various cities and districts in Central Java, informant interviews with leaders of the different communities, related documents, and GIS analyses. GIS was used to collect and visualize data based on women communities in the fields of culture, literature, and religion in Central Java. The data included spatial information on these communities, women's roles within them, as well as gender relations and lived experiences. The collection approach focused on analyzing documents, results of the distributed questionnaires, and interviews, alongside GIS data. In addition, data validity was ensured through method and source triangulation. An interactive approach based on the work of Miles and Huberman (2020) was used to conduct data analysis.

### 2.3. Research Sample

The sample consisted of various women's communities across the religious, cultural, social, and economic sectors in cities and regencies in Central Java. Additionally, questionnaires were distributed to 120 informants within these communities, including interviews conducted with founders,

community leaders, and members, as well as analyzing GIS data.

### 2.4. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques entailed conducting interviews with informants, who were mainly founders and leaders of the Central Javanese women's communities. This also included distributing questionnaires to 100 members and using the GIS results.

### 2.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis adopted the interactive model designed by Miles and Huberman (2020). The process included several stages, such as data reduction and presentation, as well as drawing conclusions.

## 3. RESULT

### 3.1. Ethno-Gender-Based Women's Communities in Central Java Using Geographic Information System (GIS)

The process included distributing questionnaires to the informants through Google Forms. In addition, the questions covered the following information

1. Age
2. Education level
3. Occupation
4. City or regency where the women's communities are located
5. Women's communities in the informant's city related to culture (e.g., women's batik community)
6. Women's communities in the informant city related to literature (e.g., women's writing group)
7. Women's communities in the informant city related to religion (e.g., women's prayer groups, religious organizations, and study groups)
8. Informant role within the women's community
  - a. Community activities
9. Changes in the informant after joining the women's community
10. Contributions of women's communities (culture, literature, religion) to improve gender equality

The results of the questionnaire proved that data was collected from 120 informants. Additionally, the results of the research are shown in the following table.

**Table 1: Results of The Central Javanese Women's Communities Questionnaires.**

| Age                                                                                                                             | Education                                                                   | Occupation                                                                                                  | City/Regency                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Cultural Community                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Literary Community                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Religious Community                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| < 20 years old = 5%<br>21-30 years old = 56.67%<br>31-40 years old = 11.67%<br>41-50 years old = 11.67%<br>> 50 years old = 15% | Senior High School=46.67%<br>Bachelor Degree=71.67%<br>Master Degree=21.67% | Lecturers = 6.67%<br>Teachers = 16.67%<br>Housewives = 13.33%<br>Students = 50.00%<br>Entrepreneur = 13.33% | Banyumas = 8.33%<br>Blora = 1.67%<br>Boyolali = 10.00%<br>Brebes = 1.67%<br>Karanganyar = 18.33%<br>Klaten = 3.33%<br>Magelang = 1.67%<br>Pemalang = 3.33%<br>Purworejo = 1.67%<br>Semarang = 3.33%<br>Sragen = 8.33%<br>Sukoharjo = 10.00%<br>Surakarta = 21.67%<br>Temanggung = 1.67%<br>Wonogiri = 5.00% | 1. Arkamaya Sukma<br>2. Batik Banyumasan (Banyumasan Batik)<br>3. Gabungan Organisasi Wanita / GOW (Federation of Women's Organizations)<br>4. Girl Up<br>5. Hijabers Community<br>6. Jawa Beksan (Javanese Dance)<br>7. Kebayak Foundation Magelang<br>8. Kelompok Perempuan Pendampingan SPEK-HAM (Women's Assistance Group of Women's Solidarity for Humanity and Human Rights)<br>9. Kelompok Wanita Tani Bunga Al-Barokah (Al-Barokah Women Farmers Group)<br>10. Kemala Ecoprint<br>11. KKP Lidia (Lidia Parish Welfare Group)<br>12. Klub Merby (Merby Club)<br>13. Komunitas Kain dan Kebaya Indonesia (Indonesian Fabric and Kebaya Community)<br>14. Komunitas Kutu Baru Itu Kita (Kutu Baru Community)<br>15. Komunitas Perempuan Batik Ecoprint (Women's Batik Ecoprint Community)<br>16. Komunitas Perempuan Karawitan (Women's Karawitan Community)<br>17. Komunitas Perempuan Petani Jawa Tengah (Central Javanese Women Farmers Community)<br>18. Komunitas Sekar Ayu (Sekar Ayu Community)<br>19. Komunitas Tari Topeng Ireng (Topeng Ireng Dance Community)<br>20. Komunitas Tin-thir (Tin-thir Community)<br>21. Komunitas Kuthu Baru (Kuthu Baru Community)<br>22. Nasyiatul Aisyiyah<br>23. Paguyuban Asri Laras (Asri Laras Association)<br>24. Perempuan Bangsa Jawa Tengah (Central Javanese Women of the Nation) | 1. Bentara Budaya Solo (Bentara Budaya Solo Cultural Center)<br>2. Boyolali Book Club (Boyolali Book Club)<br>3. Bunga Pustaka (Bunga Pustaka / Library Flowers)<br>4. Forum Lingkar Pena (Pen Circle Forum)<br>5. Hijabers Community IIDI (Hijabers Community IIDI)<br>6. Ibu-Ibu Doyan Nulis (Mothers Who Love Writing)<br>7. Kamar Kata Karanganyar (Word Room Karanganyar)<br>8. Klub Semarang Baca (Semarang Reading Club)<br>9. Komunitas Aksara Ayu (Aksara Ayu Community)<br>10. Komunitas Baca Perempuan (Women's Reading Community)<br>11. Komunitas Baca Wiji Semi For Woman (Wiji Semi Women's Reading Community)<br>12. Komunitas Blogger Perempuan Semarang Gandjel Rel (Semarang Women Bloggers Community Gandjel Rel)<br>13. Komunitas Kamar Kata Karanganyar (Karanganyar Word Room Community)<br>14. Komunitas Kidung Semilir (Kidung Semilir Community)<br>15. Komunitas Literasi dan Penulis Karanganyar (Karanganyar Literacy and Writers Community)<br>16. Komunitas Pambiworo Perempuan (Women Pambiworo Community)<br>17. Komunitas Penulisan Puisi (Poetry Writing Community)<br>18. Komunitas Perempuan Berpuisi | 1. Aisyiyah (Aisyiyah – Muhammadiyah women's organization)<br>2. Fatayat NU (Young Women of Nahdlatul Ulama)<br>3. Forum Annisa (Annisa Forum)<br>4. Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (Religious Harmony Forum)<br>5. GKI Wonogiri (Gereja Kristen Indonesia) (Indonesian Christian Church Wonogiri)<br>6. Hijab Cute (Cute Hijab Community)<br>7. Ikatan Pengusaha Muslimah Indonesia (IPEMI) (Association of Indonesian Muslim Women Entrepreneurs)<br>8. Komunitas Tin-thir (Tin-thir Community)<br>9. Komunitas IPPNU (IPPNU Community – Association of Female NU Students)<br>10. Kajian Humaira (Humaira Study Group / Islamic Study Circle)<br>11. Kajian KAFH akhwat (Kafilah Hijrah) (KAFH Women's Study Group – Hijrah Caravan)<br>12. Kanzul Arsy<br>13. Kelompok Yasinan Masjid Baitul Hakim (Yasin Recitation Group of Baitul Hakim Mosque)<br>14. KKP Lidia (Lidia Parish Welfare Group)<br>15. Komunitas Liko (Liko Community – Islamic mentoring/study circle)<br>16. Komunitas Muslimah (Kajian Kemuslimahan) (Muslim Women Community – Islamic Studies for Women)<br>17. Komunitas Perempuan Pengajian Masjid Baiturohman (Women's Quran Study Community of Baiturohman Mosque)<br>18. Komunitas Persaudaraan Muslimah (Salimah) (Muslimah Brotherhood Community – Salimah)<br>19. Komunitas Studi Sosial dan Agama (ELSA) Semarang (Social and Religious Studies Community (ELSA) Semarang)<br>20. Lembaga Dakwah Nahdlatul Ulama (LDNU) Kabupaten Sragen (Jamaah Putri) (Nahdlatul Ulama |

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|  |  |  |  | 25. Rorokenes<br>26. Sanggar Bima Ki Mantep Soedharsono (Bima Studio of Ki Mantep Soedharsono)<br>27. Sanggar Seni Sahwahita (Sahwahita Art Studio)<br>28. Sanggar Seni Serambi Sukowati (Serambi Sukowati Art Studio)<br>29. Sanggar Seni Subur Budaya (Subur Budaya Art Studio)<br>30. Sanggar Tari Bu Endang Sedep (Bu Endang Sedep Dance Studio)<br>31. Sekolah Perempuan Teras Harmoni (Teras Harmoni Women's School)<br>32. Semarak Candra Kirana<br>33. Seni Gejog Lesung Sangir (Gejog Lesung Art of Sangir)<br>34. Solo Bersimfoni (Solo in Symphony)<br>35. TP PKK Kabupaten Sragen (Family Welfare Movement Team of Sragen Regency)<br>36. Women Support Women (WSW) Boyolali<br>37. Komunitas Pegiat Kolase dan Musik Semarang (Semarang Collage and Music Community)<br>38. Pusat Kajian Perempuan Solo / PUKAPS (Solo Center for Women's Studies) | (Women's Poetry Community)<br>19. Komunitas Perempuan Penulis (Women Writers Community)<br>20. Komunitas Perempuan Petani (Women Farmers Community)<br>21. Komunitas Ranggon Sastra (Ranggon Literature Community)<br>22. Komunitas Sastra Kidung Semilir (Kidung Semilir Literary Community)<br>23. Komunitas Maos Buku Boyolali (Boyolali Book Reading Community)<br>24. Nasyiatul Aisyiah (Nasyiatul Aisyiah)<br>25. Pawon Sastra (Literary Kitchen)<br>26. Pejuang Literasi (Literacy Warriors)<br>27. Pulpen Ijo (Green Pen – Javanese Poetry Writing Community)<br>28. Read Aloud Solo Raya<br>29. Rumah Baca Duniatera (Duniatera Reading House)<br>30. Rumah Sastra Sragen (Sragen Literary House)<br>31. Sobomaos Surakarta (Sobomaos Surakarta)<br>32. Solo Book Party (Solo Book Party)<br>33. Sragen Creative Forum (Sragen Creative Forum)<br>34. Women Preneur Community Soloraya (Women Entrepreneur Community Soloraya)<br>35. Yasri / Yayasan Indonesia Madani (Yasri – Indonesian Madani Foundation) | Da'wah Institute, Sragen Regency – Women's Congregation)<br>21. Maulid Albarzanji<br>22. MT Al Amin Klatak (Al Amin Klatak Islamic Study Assembly)<br>23. Komunitas Binassallam (Binassallam Community)<br>24. Muslimat NU (Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama – NU Women's Organization)<br>25. Nasyiatul Aisyiyah<br>26. Pengajian Ibu-Ibu Annisa (Annisa Mothers' Quran Study Group)<br>27. Pengajian Muslimah Berdikari (Independent Muslim Women Study Group)<br>28. Persekutuan Perempuan Usaha Kecil GKJ (Small Business Women Fellowship of GKJ Church)<br>29. Pesona (Perempuan Sholehah Nahdhatul Ulama) (PESONA – Pious Women of Nahdlatul Ulama)<br>30. Sedekah Subuh (Dawn Charity / Morning Almsgiving)<br>31. Solo Hijabers (Solo Hijab Community)<br>32. Wanita Islam (Islamic Women)<br>33. Wanita Katolik Republik Indonesia (WKRI) (Catholic Women of the Republic of Indonesia)<br>34. Wanita Muslimah (Muslim Women)<br>35. Women Support Women (WSW) Boyolali<br>36. Wandani (Wanita Theravada Indonesia) (Indonesian Theravada Women) |
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Based on the results of the questionnaire, most of the women participating in communities (56.67%) were aged 21–30, followed by those aged 31–40 (11.67%) and 41–50 (11.67%), all in the productive age group. The majority hold a bachelor's degree (71.67%), followed by high school diploma (46.67%)

and a master's degree (21.67%). In terms of occupation, most of the women are students (50%), followed by teachers (16.67%), homemakers (13.33%), entrepreneurs (13.33%), and lecturers (6.67%). The subsequent section focused on the GIS results for the Central Javanese women's

communities.



**Figure 1: GIS of Central Javanese Women's Communities.**

The questionnaire and GIS mapping showed Central Java is home to diverse cultural, literary, and religious communities that have evolved across various cities and regencies. Furthermore, there are 38 cultural-based communities, namely (1) eight regional dance communities: Arkamaya Sukma, Jawabeksan, komunitas topeng ireng, sanggar seni sawahita, sanggar tari Bu Endang Sedep, semarak Candra Kirana, sanggar seni subur budaya, and Seni Gejog Lesung Sangir, (2) four Central Javanese music and theater communities: Komunitas Perempuan Karawitan, Paguyuban Asri Laras, Sanggar Bima Ki Mantep Sodarsono, sanggar seni serambi Sukowati, (3) eight communities focused on fabric, clothing, and accessories: Komunitas Rorokenes, Kemala Ecoprint, Komunitas Kain dan Kebaya Indonesia, Komunitas Kutu Baru Itu Kita, Komunitas Perempuan Batik Ecoprint, komunitas batik Banyumasan, Kebayak Foundation Magelang, Komunitas Kolase dan Musik Semarang, (4) eighteen general sociocultural communities: komunitas teras harmoni, komunitas Solo bersimfoni, TP PKK Kabupaten Sragen, Women Support Women, Yasri, Gabungan Organisasi Wanita, komunitas Girl up, hijabers community, Kelompok Perempuan Dampingan SPEK-HAM, Perempuan Bangsa Jawa Tengah, Kelompok Wanita Tani Bunga Al Barokah, KKP Lydia, Klub Merby, Komunitas Perempuan Petani Jawa Tengah, Komunitas Sekar Ayu, Komunitas Tin-Thir, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, Pusat Kajian Perempuan Solo (PUKAPS).

Culturally rooted Central Javanese women's communities tend to focus on the preservation of local traditions, such as regional dances, music, theater, textiles, clothing, and accessories. Local wisdom is the responsibility of both men and

women, within the framework of gender equality. Furthermore, women lead and mobilize communities to preserve culture at the local, national, and international levels. This is consistent with the research conducted by Suryawan, which stated women in the Kasepuhan Adat Sinar Resmi community exhibited community loyalty. The observation affirmed cultural identity and upheld gender roles developed within Kasepuhan Adat Sinar Resmi and the broader Sundanese culture.

The communities aimed to preserve regional culture and strengthen the roles of women in an inclusive and sustainable economy. This was achieved through the creation of beautiful batik and Eco print designs, including the development of attractive new kebaya and kutu baru (traditional Indonesian clothing), resulting in the production of regional accessories that remained appealing and current. Meanwhile, cultural preservation, guided by community leaders, attracts a large female workforce that contributes to the advancement of culture-based MSMEs. The result of this research is consistent with Yulianto & Wijayanti (2025), who examined cultural communities in Sumba, reporting that Sumbanese women actively participated in cultural preservation, weaving, and traditional food production. The supporting factors include family motivation and training.

Generally, sociocultural communities do not operate within a single cultural aspect. These communities engage in mobilizing and empowering women across all fields, voicing the enthusiasm for progress and contributing to development. Training and mentorship were provided for members to strengthen mental and emotional health, enhance community awareness and solidarity, as well as fight for women's rights and principles. This included improving discriminatory organizational cultures and the provision of education. As a result, women were encouraged to act and speak up during sexual violence, and more. The result is consistent with the research by Sumampouw & Patricia (2023), which explored the Mahardika gender community in Yogyakarta. This community promoted feminist values, serving as a space to voice complaints about violence and gender inequality.

In this context, the 35 communities that focused on literature, were stated as follows: (1) twelve literary reading communities, including Boyolali Book Club (BBC), Bunga Pustaka, Klub Semarang Baca, Komunitas Baca Perempuan, Komunitas Baca Wiji Semi For Woman, Komunitas Perempuan Berpuisi, Komunitas Perempuan Petani Jawa Tengah, Maos Buku Boyolali, Read Aloud Solo Raya,

Rumah Baca Duniatera, Sobomaos Surakarta, Solo Book Party, (2) fifteen literary writing communities, namely Forum Lingkar Pena, Hijabers Community IIDI, Ibu-Ibu Doyan Nulis, Kamar Kata Karanganyar, Komunitas Aksara Ayu, Komunitas Blogger Perempuan Semarang Gandjel Rel, Komunitas Kamar Kata Karanganyar, Komunitas Literasi dan Penulis Karanganyar, Komunitas Penulisan Puisi, Komunitas Perempuan Penulis, Komunitas Ranggon Sastra, Pawon Sastra, Pejuang Literasi, Pulpen Ijo (Komunitas Menulis Geguritan/Puisi Jawa), Rumah Sastra Sragen, (3) eight arts and literature communities, such as Bentara Budaya Solo, Komunitas Kidung Semilir, Komunitas Pambiworo Perempuan, Komunitas Sastra Kidung Semilir, Nasyiatul Aisyiah, Sragen Creative Forum, WPC (Women Preneur Community) Soloraya, Yasri (Yayasan Indonesia Madani).

The most prominent literary community in Central Java is the reading community, where members read, review, and discuss books. Another community was also dedicated to women who read aloud to children. In addition, women were educated on the importance of reading aloud to help children develop literacy habits. The result was in line with the research by Ardana & Mulyono (2025), who identified Rumah Baca Soka Salatiga as a community reading center that played a strategic role in building literacy through various functions. This included serving as an information hub to broaden knowledge and perspectives, thereby providing educational entertainment, fostering character development, as well as offering skills training.

The literary writing community motivated its members to be courageous in producing literary works, including prose and poetry, to enlighten society. The community also fostered self-confidence through writing training, empowering members to write and publish books, appreciated by the public, thereby promoting awareness of women's roles. The result is consistent with the research by Maulina & Fardani (2023), which stated the literary community in North Sumatra has the potential to promote gender justice through related works, discussions, and training. Meanwhile, the arts and literature community is broader, comprising fine arts, Javanese singing, and presenters, including more.

The 36 religious-based communities, were stated as follows (1) Twenty-seven Islamic religious communities, including Aisyiyah, Fatayat NU, Forum Annisa, Hijab Cute, Ikatan Pengusaha Muslimah Indonesia (IPEMI), komunitas IPPNU, Kajian Humaira, Kajian KAFH Akhwat (Kafilah Hijrah), Kanzul Arsy, Kelompok Yasinan Masjid

Baitul Hakim, Komunitas Ligo, Komunitas Muslimah (Kajian Kemuslimahan), Komunitas Perempuan Pengajian Masjid Baiturrohman, Komunitas Persaudaraan Muslimah (Salimah), Lembaga Dakwah Nahdlatul Ulama (LDNU) Kabupaten Sragen (Jamaah Putri), Maulid Albarzanji, MT Al Amin Klatak, MT Binassallam, Muslimat NU, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, Pengajian Ibu-Ibu Annisa, Pengajian Muslimah Berdikari, Pesona (Perempuan Sholehah Nahdlatul Ulama, Sedekah Subuh, Solo Hijabers, Wanita Islam, Wanita Muslimah, (2) three Christian religious communities, namely GKI (Gereja Kristen Indonesia) Wonogiri, KKP Lidya, Persekutuan Perempuan Usaha Kecil GKJ Manahan Surakarta, (3) one Catholic community, Wanita Katolik Republik Indonesia (WKRI), (4) two Buddhist communities, such as Komunitas Tin-Thir, Wandani (Wanita Theravada Indonesia), (5) three interfaith communities, namely Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama, Women Support Women (WSW) Boyolali, komunitas Studi Sosial dan Agama (ELSA) Semarang.

The largest religious community is the Islamic community, with 28 groups, because the majority of the population are Muslims. In Central Java, Muslims constitute 97.30%, Christians 1.43%, Catholics 1.04%, Hindus 0.08%, Buddhists 0.13%, and Confucianism 0.01% (Badan Pusat Statistik Jawa Tengah, 2025). The next-largest communities were Protestants, Buddhists, and Catholics. The WKRI community aimed to develop skills, empower members to realize the potential of Catholic women, ensure devotion was realized sustainably, including advocacy for gender equality and justice in all aspects of life. The community also hosted training sessions and seminars to raise awareness about gender equality. This was in line with the research by Regan (2025), that the world Catholic church motivated women to actively participate and partner with men in the church and society. The outcome also entailed responsibly supporting each other in education, service, leadership, and decision-making, as well as empowering women to expand roles.

Christian women's communities focused on religious practices while promoting economic empowerment, which is a significant means of achieving gender equality. This is in line with the research by (Stefan, 2025) that religion is the most influential sociocultural factor affecting gender equality. Christian traditions have influenced perceptions of women's roles in society through gender equality education. Buddhist women's communities focused on religious practices and

economic empowerment. Additionally, programs that promoted economic empowerment helped women gain financial independence, bolster social resilience, and foster internal solidarity (Rahayu, 2025).

The Muslim women's community is affiliated with Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and Islam in general (not affiliated specifically with Muhammadiyah or Nahdlatul Ulama organizations). Muhammadiyah aims to support improvements in the quality of life across education, economics, health, and social sectors. This organization addressed gender inequality, empowering women to become more independent, prosperous, and active in society. Women's communities under Muhammadiyah include Aisyiyah, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, and Komunitas Perempuan Pengajian Masjid Baiturohman. The result is in line with the research by Hanifah & Azani (2025), that 'Aisyiyah women in Central Java played an important role in empowerment and community welfare realized through skills training programs, health initiatives, and educational services.

Nadhlatul Ulama aimed to develop independent and pious women, aware of the obligations and rights defined by Islamic teachings, both as individuals and members of society. Furthermore, the women's communities under Nadhlatul Ulama include Fatayat NU, komunitas IPPNU, Lembaga Dakwah Nahdlatul Ulama (LDNU) Kabupaten Sragen (Jamaah Putri), Maulid Albarzanji, MT Al Amin Klatak, MT Binassallam, Muslimat NU, Pesona (Perempuan Sholehah Nahdlatul Ulama). This result is in line with the research by Rofiah & Abillah (2025), that the communities under Nadhlatul Ulama reflected an internal awareness of the need for women to have equal space in religious institutions. Moreover, women complement male-led movements and are also active agents with agendas as well as contributions to socio-religious development.

Islamic religious communities in general (not affiliated with Muhammadiyah or NU), include Forum Annisa, Hijab Cute, Ikatan Pengusaha Muslimah Indonesia (IPEMI), Kajian Humaira, Kajian KAFH Akhwat (Kafilah Hijrah), Kanzul Arsy, Kelompok Yasinan Masjid Baitul Hakim, Komunitas Ligo, Komunitas Muslimah (Kajian Kemuslimahan), Komunitas Persaudaraan Muslimah (Salimah), Pengajian Ibu-Ibu Annisa, Pengajian Muslimah Berdikari, Sedekah Subuh, Solo Hijabers, Wanita Islam, and Wanita Muslimah. These communities mainly focused on religious activities, sharia economics, study groups, Yasinan, discussions, and collaborating to advance Muslim women.

Based on this perspective, three interfaith communities aim to build, maintain, and empower women of various religions toward harmony and prosperity. Indonesia is a Pancasila-based country, founded on the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity), and therefore highly values religious pluralism. Interfaith harmony is based on tolerance, mutual respect, equality in the practice of religious teachings, and prioritizing cooperation in societal life, the nation, and the Indonesian state. This served as an important foundation for maintaining social stability and national integration. Moreover, interfaith harmony is determined by theological factors, government policies, multicultural education, the role of religious leaders, and constructive interfaith communication. The synergy between the state, society, and religious institutions is essential in designing sustainable programs to maintain interfaith harmony. Furthermore, character education and religious moderation from an early age also play a crucial role (Nasution, 2025); (Amrullah & Rofiq, 2025); (Ronaldo & Riyanto, 2025).

In this context, 98.78% of the informants participated in at least one of the women's communities' initiatives. Approximately 51.43% held managerial or organizational roles in various communities, with 50% as regular members. Additionally, 95.48% of informants experienced personal changes after joining the women's communities.

### ***3.2. Forms of empowerment within the Central Javanese women's communities using an ethno-gender-based approach with a Geographic Information System (GIS)***

The contributions of the women's communities (culture, literature, and religion) to improve gender equality (especially for women) are diverse. Informant TS, a member of the Read Aloud literary community, stated that the activities aim to introduce children to literary reading at an early age. The family serves as a child's first environment for literacy development, with the mother as the main educator. The community's enthusiasm was evident in its growing membership and ongoing activities that motivate women to instill reading literacy in children from an early age. In addition, members are also motivated to read a book of a specific title weekly and review it together during scheduled meetings. According to the perspective of the Read Aloud leader, mothers should first develop reading literacy and love of books before motivating children to do the same, as books are perceived as a window to the world.

RN, an activist in the Lingkar Pena Forum, stated that this community is a writing community with a non-gender-specific focus. In practice, the membership is predominantly constituted of women. This community motivates members to become literate by reading literary works, as well as actively engaging in writing. The members, who are mostly housewives, tend to be enthusiastic about creatively collaborating to write and publish literary works, aimed at gaining public appreciation and boosting these women's self-confidence. Initially, the women were childcare providers, but the Lingkar Pena Forum enabled the recognition of potential which deserved to be developed and appreciated. RW, the leader of the Lingkar Pena Forum, stated that the objective was to motivate the maximization of writing potential. Writing competence is mastered through continuous practice and guidance. Furthermore, it has been proven that women can express thoughts and feelings through writing.

PW, a women's activist at the Lydia small business under the Javanese Christian Church (JCC), stated that JCC focused on its members' religious activities, as well as fostered economic well-being. Additionally, women played an equal, or even greater, role in family economic decision-making. The members were provided with various training and funding opportunities for trading and small businesses.

HT, an activist with the Indonesian Muslim Women Entrepreneurs Association, stated that women's participation in the economic sector as entrepreneurs enabled control over communities' economic resources. Moreover, these communities provided opportunities for members to develop businesses, contributing to national development and improving community welfare.

RK, a founder and activist in cultural, literary, and religious communities, stated that these aspects contributed to increasing gender awareness and equality. Various communities provided a supportive space for women to share experiences and thoughts, to help each other in self-development. This was also perceived as a place to develop competencies according to respective preferences and self-actualization. The various communities motivated social change where women experienced gender equality, awareness, and empowerment to contribute to national development. The result is in accordance with the research by (Amzat & Al-ani, 2017) that as long as traditions upheld conservative views on women, family attitudes in society adhered to noncompromising principles of gender equality. As a result, women will remain marginalized,

resulting in the implementation of policies that support gender equality.

The results of the research showed that the women's communities in Central Java are strong and diverse. All communities incorporated the struggle for gender equality into their respective objectives and missions to advance women in various fields, such as culture, literature, and religion. Some communities supported the economic independence of women as indicated in the research by (Herlambang & Suratman, 2023), which stated the trader community in Karangawen, Demak, aimed to enable women to actualize themselves, interact socially, and support each other during members' economic activities. Similarly, research by (Emi & Hendraarti, 2025), found that the Islamic religious community under Muhammadiyah focused on related activities, such as the dissemination of Islamic egalitarianism, education, advocacy on women's issues, and the critical reinterpretation of religion for gender justice. The result differed from the analysis by Ringson (2025), which stated in African society, although gender equality is an important program for intensifying sustainable development objectives, it is obstructed by philosophical contestation over religion and culture. Different results were found in Ende Flores, which research by Fatmawati & Suryani (2025) stated that the local culture of Ende strongly influenced the formation of women's roles. Gender barriers tend to persist, with government policies partially contributing to the social change. Consequently, achieving gender equality in Ende required synergy between public policy, community support, and women's empowerment. The diverse efforts should be accompanied by a transformation of literacy culture to strengthen the capacity to actively participate in development. This result is consistent with the research by Putnam (2020), which examined the strength of community networks as a social resource responsible for fostering solidarity and collective action.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The existence of 109 women's communities in Central Java demonstrates a strong commitment to gender equality. These communities also place a strong emphasis on the economic roles of women through initiatives such as training, mentoring, funding, and economic guidance. This approach is consistent with the views of Lalthapersad-Pillay (2025), who stated that which states that gender equality and women's economic empowerment are mutually reinforcing as they both influence their respective outcomes. Eliminating gender inequalities

and improving women's economic empowerment is essential to enable women to acquire skills; to realize their full potential; to participate in decent work opportunities; to foster economic growth; to reduce poverty; to acquire prosperity and foster sustainable development. This is also in accordance with research Kupczyk et al. (2025) which states it is widely recognised that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also an essential foundation for peaceful, sustainable and balanced economic growth worldwide.

Based on the research results, 51.43% of respondents are administrators of various communities for women. These respondents serve as driving forces within these communities and actively advocate for women's empowerment. This aligns with Williams et al. (2025) who stated that some women in communities represent the cutting edge of change for women's empowerment, and such women are the drivers for changing norms that prohibit or even facilitate backlash to women's economic empowerment.

This is in accordance with opinion Within cultural communities, women preserve Central Javanese culture while advancing women's economic well-being through cultural artifacts such as batik, kebaya, accessories, dance, music, and others. This result is in accordance with previous research by Sun et al. (2026) which states that as women engage in preserving and inheriting cultural heritage, their empowerment evolves dynamically across the three stages of 'task-oriented empowerment,' 'career-oriented empowerment,' and 'mission-oriented empowerment' driven by the internal mechanism of 'functional premium – justice distance – empowerment autonomy.'

As many as 61.67% of the administrators and members of women communities in Central Java are Gen Z, aged 16-30. These administrators demonstrate a strong commitment to women's empowerment as part of sustainable development. Furthermore,

awareness of gender equality and women's empowerment is well-known among Gen Z women in Central Java. This is in accordance with research by Layla et al. (2024) which states: Generation Z women can become leaders if they possess skills, abilities, authority, uphold deliberation, act fairly, prioritize reason over emotion, and understand the nuances of leadership. In contrast, research conducted by Mori et al. (2025) suggests that gender equality in the Philippines is often misunderstood as a claim of women's superiority over men. Therefore, this view needs to be corrected. Hence, educational institutions, local governments, and non-governmental and private organizations must provide avenues to deepen Gen Zs understanding, appreciation, and involvement in feminism and feminist movements. On Gen Z women in the Philippines shows that gender equality needs further clarification as it is often misunderstood as a claim of women superiority over men.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this research showed that the majority of Central Javanese women aged 21-30 years old (56.67%) joined many communities. The result also suggested that Generation Z plays a significant role in various cultural, literary, and religious women's communities. The essence was to jointly fight for gender equality, which was among the UN SDGs and Indonesian government's Asta Cita programs. Furthermore, 61.67% of the 109 women's communities were led by Gen Z, and most held bachelor's degrees (71.67%). This showed that highly educated women had greater awareness and concern for both personal development and the advancement of others to progress together in building Indonesia. The observation was evidenced by 95.48% of Central Java informants based on changes experienced after joining women's communities.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** This research is funded by the Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) on behalf of the Indonesian Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and managed under the EQUITY Program of Universitas Sebelas Maret (Contract No. 4315/B3/DT.03.08/2025 and No. 84/UN27/KS/2025) in the scheme of Riset Kolaborasi Indonesia (RKI) Program EQUITY The Impact Rankings SKEMA A (Kolaborasi 16 PTNBH) 2025.

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